

REYNOLDS EXHIBIT 1

CBS 58 Interview

Omar Flores

It seems some folks are still setting up. Are we all good to go? Okay seems like we're good. Casey are we on the live stream? Great. Thank you. Hello, everyone. My name is Omar Flores. I am the co-chair of the Coalition of March on the RNC. After a year of denied permits and the announcement of an undemocratic permitting system, the Coalition of March on the RNC is proud to announce that we are suing the City of Milwaukee for violating our First Amendment rights. We have been clear from the beginning. We will march within sight and sound of the Fiserv Forum as it is our constitutional right to assemble, speak, and petition. The City of Milwaukee still has not provided any concrete details about the hard and soft security zones for the RNC or about their approved parade route. We are taking matters into our own hands and demanding that they allow us to march the route that we have been requesting permits for since April of 2023. When Milwaukee was announced for the location, as a location for the RNC in 2022, Mayor Johnson claimed that the decision to host the RNC was a "business decision to attract tourist dollars to Milwaukee and it wasn't a political one." However, the city has bent over backwards to accommodate the racist, reactionary Republicans while stonewalling Milwaukee community members who want to have their voices heard and protest. Even with their new permitting system, it makes it clear that their priority is catering to the Republicans and not every day Milwaukeeans. They want to force us onto their parade route, not a march route or demonstration route with no guarantee it will be a march to a time frame they decide. I'm sorry, with no guarantee, it will be anywhere near the Fiserv Forum. Additionally, this permitting system allows the city to limit our march to a time frame that they decide. On the other hand, the Republicans have all week in multiple convention centers to make their voices heard. The Coalition of March on the DNC, I'm sorry, RNC, is disappointed but not surprised that the City of Milwaukee is more concerned with letting Republicans spread their racist agenda than letting us exercise our rights to protest. We hope this lawsuit will grant us our First Amendment right to be in the streets but no matter what the permits or the courts say, we'll be marching within sight and sound of the Fiserv Forum in July. We know that the people of Milwaukee are with us and we will not let our city become a playground for the Republicans. Milwaukee's proud history of being a city of unions, immigrants, black and brown families and LGBTQ people, we will not stand for the Republicans in the City of Milwaukee's attempts to erase our

diversity in the past or the present. And so for those that received a media statement, on the back you will see our requested route. This is a route that we have requested since last year from the RNC and we have not heard anything from the city about this route. You'll also see a poster behind....**move closer (in audible)** We have it printed out nice and big for everyone. So they understand the route that we're looking to march. In 2020, a lot of us were organized around marching on the DNC, hence the mistake I made earlier by saying DNC. I mean, that whole year of 2020, we're were saying March on the DNC. Uh, this is a route that we had marched. The march was completely family friendly. There were no issues. We marched without a permit despite trying to get a permit and everything went okay. And so what the Republicans are putting out in their press releases and by their lawyers that we're seeking to start violence, that you know we're seeking to uh I think it was for meant discord or something like that within the city. It's completely unwarranted. Uh when the Republicans came here to debate in 2023, we were the ones that led that march of hundreds of people in 100-degree weather and everything went perfectly okay. The city has no right to withhold **(inaudible)** our right to host a family friendly demonstration and so at this point, we'll be taking any questions or comments about our lawsuit in this press conference.

Reporter: Could you give some specifics about the lawsuit....where's it been filed **(inaudible)** Who's your lawyer and what's **(inaudible)** Are you looking for injunctive relief?

Omar Flores We are seeking injunctive relief just because of the time frame that we have. We're about 40 days out from the RNC and so, I mean really it's left us no other choice. Uh, they've held off this the releasing of the route and the releasing of where we'll be able to be until the last minute and so unfortunately that's what we've had to do. Um more specific questions about the lawsuit, I would feel more comfortable if folks were to reach out to the ACLU just because I don't want to misspeak on any of like the legal jargon. Uh you know, we have a pretty firm grasp of what's going on but I'd rather not give people the wrong information and so, for everyone that got one of these sheets, you will see our lawyers email on there and they will be willing to respond to any media comments.

Reporter: The ACLU is representing you?

Omar Flores: Yeah, the ACLU is representing us. Uh we signed a retainer with them from the very start of our coalition.

Reporter: (inaudible) federal lawsuit?

Omar Flores: Yeah.

Reporter: Your proposed map for your parade route goes right next to Fiserv, theoretically what will be inside the Secret Service Security Zone which hasn't been announced yet. You're suing the City not the secret service. Can you tell me why?

Omar Flores: Well because the city is the one that's allowed all of this to happen right? Uh we are the host city right? It's not like people just came in randomly and decided to take over. It's because our city leadership, our city leadership without a backbone has allowed the Republicans to come here and do whatever they want in our city and so that's that's why the lawsuit is against the city.

Reporter: The city has little to no control of the secret service zone which presumably will be at you know, its.....

Omar Flores: And if you were at the secret service press thing that was going on in here in Milwaukee around like nine, I was told that I guess they're saying that they have no idea what's going on that they're waiting on the city. It's really, this is just a game that the Secret Service and the city are playing. They're going to keep passing the buck back and forth just to basically prevent us from being able to have our First Amendment rights. They have not given us clear answers and honestly, this is like very typically Milwaukee and it's being shown the most here through this lawsuit on a national scale because the City of Milwaukee traditionally for those of us like for example, the Milwaukee Alliance Against Racism Political Repression, getting any information out of especially the police in this city or any information out of the city is near impossible. There's no transparency as to what the process is here. We've talked with business owners. We've you know heard from the secret service. We've heard from city leaders. Everyone says the same thing that they have no idea what's going on and it's in somebody else's hands. And so really it it's just a complete joke when they say that they have no idea what's going on or they have no responsibility as to what's happening here in this city.

Reporter: What do you think that the City does (inaudible)

Omar Flores: We feel that they need to do their job and actually listen to the people that are actually like living here in Milwaukee. All of the primary organizers. Well we are a national coalition to be clear. We have a lots of people coming from around the country. Everyone that's primarily organizing around this is from here in Milwaukee and so what we're asking is that they just do their job, listen to the citizens that are actually here and and allow us to at least have a right to march right? So many people didn't even want the RNC to come here to begin with. You know, outside of like maybe a few business owners that are under the illusion that this is somehow going to bring them economic benefit when honestly a lot of businesses are being forced to close down because of of the security zone, because of all the other things that are going on in the city. And so we're just asking them to do their job and allow us our First Amendment rights. Again, this March route is within sight and sound of the RNC. We're not going to be led back to their protest pens where essentially we're just going to be, I mean, chanting and screaming to no one. Uh, I mean, that's really not a protest. We are looking to be within sight and sound of the Fiserv Forum and nothing less and we know it's our right and so whether we get a permit or not, we are going to be marching that route. This is, the past two years has been us trying to engage with the city in good faith about doing this the proper way right? Uh we filled out their their first permit application which is the more general one, the one that the city always uses and then they shifted the goal post by passing an ordinance that made it even more difficult to get a permit with all of these new restrictions. That's not something that we're willing to abide by. We followed the process. We did exactly what they told us to do and we still don't have a route and that's really what's going on here.

Reporter: Do you feel like (inaudible)

Omar Flores: Ultimately we're the host city and I think that we have a right to say what people could do or not okay? If they're coming to our city, they don't get to tell us what's appropriate or not. We have to tell them and I think that they're going to get the best feedback from people in the community and from our coalition.

Reporter: If you (inaudible) are you anticipating arrest

Omar Flores

Well we're hoping not, but you can't be held accountable for what the police might do. A lot of us that are are going to be marching during the RNC have plenty of different experiences and marching on conventions or intense situations, right. Uh you now, for example, I was marching in Kenosha. It was, I think it was day two and for 8 hours, we marched completely peacefully, family friendly. Everything went perfectly fine. We went through most of the city. The moment that we get back to the courthouse and the police started throwing flashbangs tear gas, engaging with people in a violent manner, that's when things went south. That's what we're trying to avoid by getting this permit right? This is not us like trying to flout against the rules, right? This is us actually trying to play by the rules and the city is not letting us. There is no opportunity through the city to play by the rules and so, it leaves us no other option. We know what our rights are and we know that we're able to be within sight and sound of the Fiserv Forum and so whether the city is willing to recognize that or not, we are and whatever the risk it may bring, its honestly up to the city. It's not up to us. This is up to the city.

Reporter:

Leading up to this (**inaudible**)

Omar Flores:

I'm actually really happy that you asked. Um the city has been hosting these supposed community meetings through I forget even the office's name but one of the leaders of it is is Quinn Taylor for example. Uh this is also being led by Nick Desiato who used to be a Milwaukee Police Department which I feel like is an important detail. All of the feedback that we gave through those community meetings was never forwarded to the people that actually had power in decision making and and what the city is able to do and so we went to it was a public works committee meeting and when I talk with Alderman Bauman about some of the things that we're concerned about, some of the things that we wanted to see change in the the new permitting ordinance that they they had released, he said this is his first time ever hearing about these complaints and and so that that's a huge issue right? You have these community input meetings so that way they're able to forward our concerns to the people that could actually make make change and those things were never forwarded. Essentially they're taking our feedback and putting it into a trash can and and so we have tried to engage with the city but every step of the way, they've dragged their feet and they've refused to work with us in a legitimate manner.

Reporter: Something about counsel and a special meeting tomorrow for this situation?

Omar Flores: Again they need to allow us to march within sight and sound of the RNC. Anything short of that is something that we don't have to agree to. What the city has been trying to do is to get us to agree to something that is like extra-legal, right? Like something that is like less than the full extent of our First Amendment rights. They can try to say, well you know you know maybe we start at Ziedler Union Square Park for example and now we're doing it at Pere Marquette Park. Isn't that an improvement? Don't you guys want to take that? When really we're supposed to be able to march within sight and sound of the Fiserv and so we're not going to agree to anything less than that.

Reporter: (inaudible) talking about how about other conventions earlier (inaudible) happens every four years.

Omar Flores: It feels like it does, yeah and the organizers that we have nationally that have for example participated in the march on the RNC in 2008, this is a very similar situation that they saw. The reason why the city holds off releasing the route and releasing whether they're going to allow people to march is because it allows basically no time for a lawsuit. It's like a strategic thing so that way we don't have an opportunity to fight for our First Amendment rights and so yes this is a pattern that we've seen every four years.

Reporter: You plan to use Pere Marquette Park in addition to this or just this and not go to (inaudible) that is the (inaudible) zone.

Omar Flores: Yeah we're going to be marching on this route and we're not even going to be engaging with Pere Marquette Park because it's not within sight or sound of the Fiserv Forum and so we are not engaging with Pere Marquette Park.

Reporter: What's the message do you protest? (inaudible) primarily (inaudible)

Omar Flores: Oh, that is an aspect of it. Uh we do have four different points of I think actually five different points of unity now. Uh, one of them is that we stand with Palestine. Another aspect is that we fight against Republicans, racist, and reactionary agenda. Another one is that we want to defend and expand immigrant rights. Uh, we are also

fighting for women TQ reproductive rights. Uh, and peace and justice and equity for all and I may have forgot one, I'm sorry, I'm going off the top of my head here. Uh but that's a primary goal of our protest. Uh, we wanted to be as big tent as possible for anyone that opposes the Republican's agenda.

Reporter: When was the last time you talked with the City; it sounded from them like you had a conversation with them recently **(inaudible)**.

Omar Flores: So it's funny because like as a word has started to go around that we are filing a lawsuit against the city, we heard from Quinn Taylor that he's trying to host a community meeting this Friday and we had emailed him weeks ago. When is this community meeting going to happen? He's like, well we don't have it scheduled yet, we're trying to figure out a lot of things, kind of dragging feet and now that we're filing for a lawsuit they're telling us well you guys hurry up. We're going to try and do something on Friday. Mind you, none of us get paid to do this right? All of us work full-time jobs. All of us are working class folks. You know we don't really just randomly deciding **(inaudible)** on Friday. Uh less than a week in advance. They're not really conducive to getting real community feedback and and so like I'm not sure if I would personally consider that like a conversation with the city but it seems that since catching wind of this lawsuit, that they are willing to play ball a little bit more. And it's a shame that we should have to resort to this to be able to hear from the city at all.

Reporter: **(inaudible)** meeting on Friday?

Omar Flores: We plan on going to the meeting on Friday as well as pursuing our lawsuit. Uh for us it will be mostly just information gathering.

Reporter: Are the Fire and Police Commission in any of this?

Omar Flores: Fire and Police Commission we have not heard from them except for them completely suspending SOP 575 which is an ordinance that allows us to have access to critical incidents when police kill for example or attempt to kill. Uh they got rid of that for the duration of the RNC which is a scary for a lot of us organizers, right? Because I mean, we should have access to what people are going to do. They have 4,500 law enforcement officers coming to our city. Many of whom might not even have body cameras. That's not a part of their MOU and and so you have 4,500 police officers coming from

outside of this town. Mind you, over in Chicago, they found nine different oathkeepers in the police force. This is an extremist right-wing organization. Those people could very well be coming to our city. Not having SOP 575 is a great danger to everyone that's going to be involved with protesting or anyone that's even within the security zone for the RNC and so really the only role that the Fire and Police Commission has played is to just completely play into what the Republicans want. The Republicans have been coming here and trying to create Milwaukee in their own image and that's a part of it right? No transparency and letting the police do whatever they want.

Reporter: (inaudible)

Omar Flores: We're expecting quite a few thousand. And so we have around like 71 different organizations signed on. Some of them national in nature. For example, the National Alliance Against Racist and Political Oppression. Uh we have Code Pink. We have students for Democratic Society, Freedom Road Socialist Organization. I could sit here and maybe check my phone to see the 71 endorsements that we have but we're expecting a very large turnout.

Reporter: You got anything on the hearing date?

Omar Flores: We have not heard of a hearing date at this point in time.

Reporter: When did you file?

Omar Flores: Uh we filed according to our lawyers last night. Yup.

Reporter: Why is Homeland Security?

Omar Flores: I'm sorry?

Reporter: Why is Homeland Security (inaudible)

Omar Flores: Oh that's a great question. I think that they're already getting some practice in their repression and honestly it's something that really isn't like super unheard of for these types of conventions. Uh back in 2008, a lot of organizers with Freedom Road Socialist Organization had a big role in marching against the RNC and what they did after that point actually was plant informants into that organization to try to try them on a supporting a terrorist

organization. Uh charges which were completely defeated had no material basis, had nothing whatsoever and yet, I meant these people had their doors kicked down. It was over a dozen of them and so we're unfortunately expecting a similar response here in Milwaukee. People trying to criminalized a legitimate protest and honestly and it we haven't really seen at least this visibly homeland security coming to our marches, our protests. I think it's interesting that they started showing up after we started getting serious with the lawsuit and so again this is terrible precedent right? This is us trying to play by the rules. This is us trying to get a permit to march and this is the response, that they send homeland security. It's completely absurd.

Reporter: (Inaudible)

Omar Flores: I'm sorry

Reporter: (Inaudible)

Omar Flores: Uh we have a great security team and we also have plenty of great organizations here in Milwaukee that have experience in dealing with repression. For example, the Milwaukee Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression which I'm a proud member of. Uh, we are completely ready for anything that might come to us during or after the March. Uh there's a lot of discussion about maybe some of the surveillance equipment that's going to stay within Milwaukee after the RNC leaves right? Cuz when the RNC leaves it doesn't actually leave. It leaves behind you know, again, like some of these surveillance techniques. Uh you know these facial recognition cameras, some of the social media software that they're planning on using to link organizers together. Uh the submarine that they're buying. Uh all that stuff stays here in Milwaukee but on the flip side a lot of the unity that we form here in Milwaukee between organizations, between community organizations, that's also going to exist after the RNC is over and that type of unity is really really helpful for us and being able to fight back against federal repression.

Uh thank you everyone for appearing today. If you have any questions, feel free to speak with me. Thank you